

**EXHIBIT B**  
**Juniper Project DEIS**  
**(2023)**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Bald Mountain Mine Plan of Operations Amendment Juniper Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

DOI-BLM-NV-L060-2021-0013-EIS



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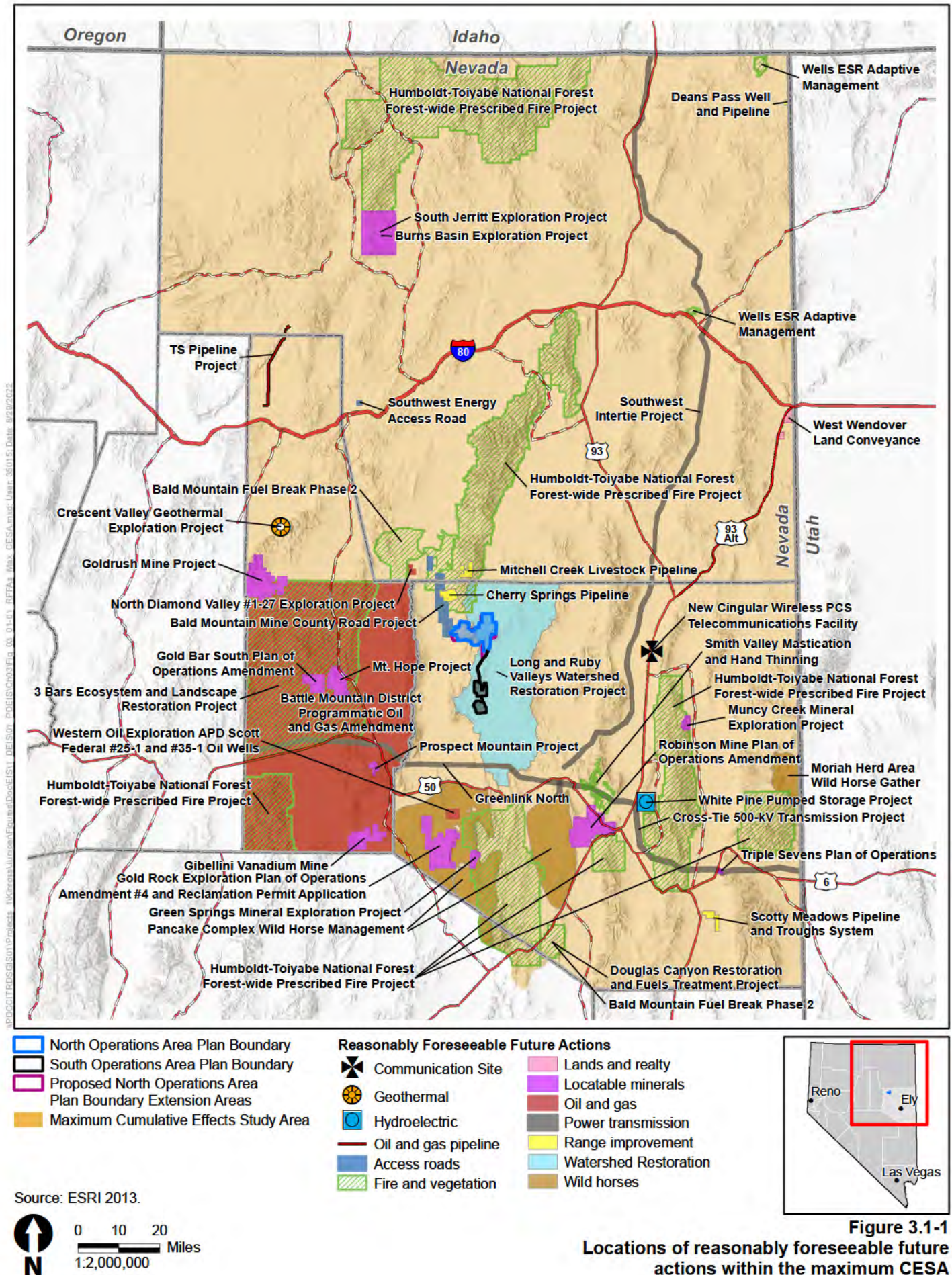
## **CHAPTER 3.       AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **3.1.       INTRODUCTION**

This chapter describes the affected environment and environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and alternatives, both independently and in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs) and trends. The affected environment is the existing condition of the natural resources and human uses that have the potential to change in response to the environmental consequences of actions presented in Chapter 2. Discussion of the affected environment and environmental consequences is organized by topic in Sections 3.2 through 3.21 and focuses on issues raised during internal and external scoping that the BLM has determined warrant detailed analysis. During construction and operation of the Juniper Project, KG Mining (Bald Mountain) Inc. (KG-BM) would continue to implement the applicant-committed environmental protection measures (ACEPMs) and new ACEPMs to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation (see Appendix C). The discussion of effects or impacts in each section encompasses direct, indirect, and cumulative effects as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1508.1(g)). Each section also identifies any applicable monitoring and mitigation measures proposed to reduce impacts on each resource, and any residual impacts that would remain after their application. If effects on a resource do not require monitoring or mitigation, then residual effects do not apply and do not require analysis. Finally, Section 3.22 describes the relationship between short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would result from the Proposed Action and alternatives.

Appendix F, *Cumulative Effects*, identifies other actions that may contribute to effects on the human environment in combination with the Proposed Action and alternatives. The information contained in this appendix provides context for the cumulative effects analysis provided in the *Cumulative Effects* subsection under each resource. Specifically, Appendix F, Section F.2, identifies the cumulative effect study area (CESA) for each resource. Section F.3 provides an overview of past and present actions and trends relevant to the impact analysis. Effects from past and present actions are also discussed in the description of the affected environment for each resource as appropriate. Section F.4 describes RFFAs (Table F.2) and indicates which CESA each RFFA overlaps (Table F.3). The locations of RFFAs considered in the cumulative effects analysis are displayed on Figure 3.1-1.







**Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences**

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**3.11. WILD HORSES**

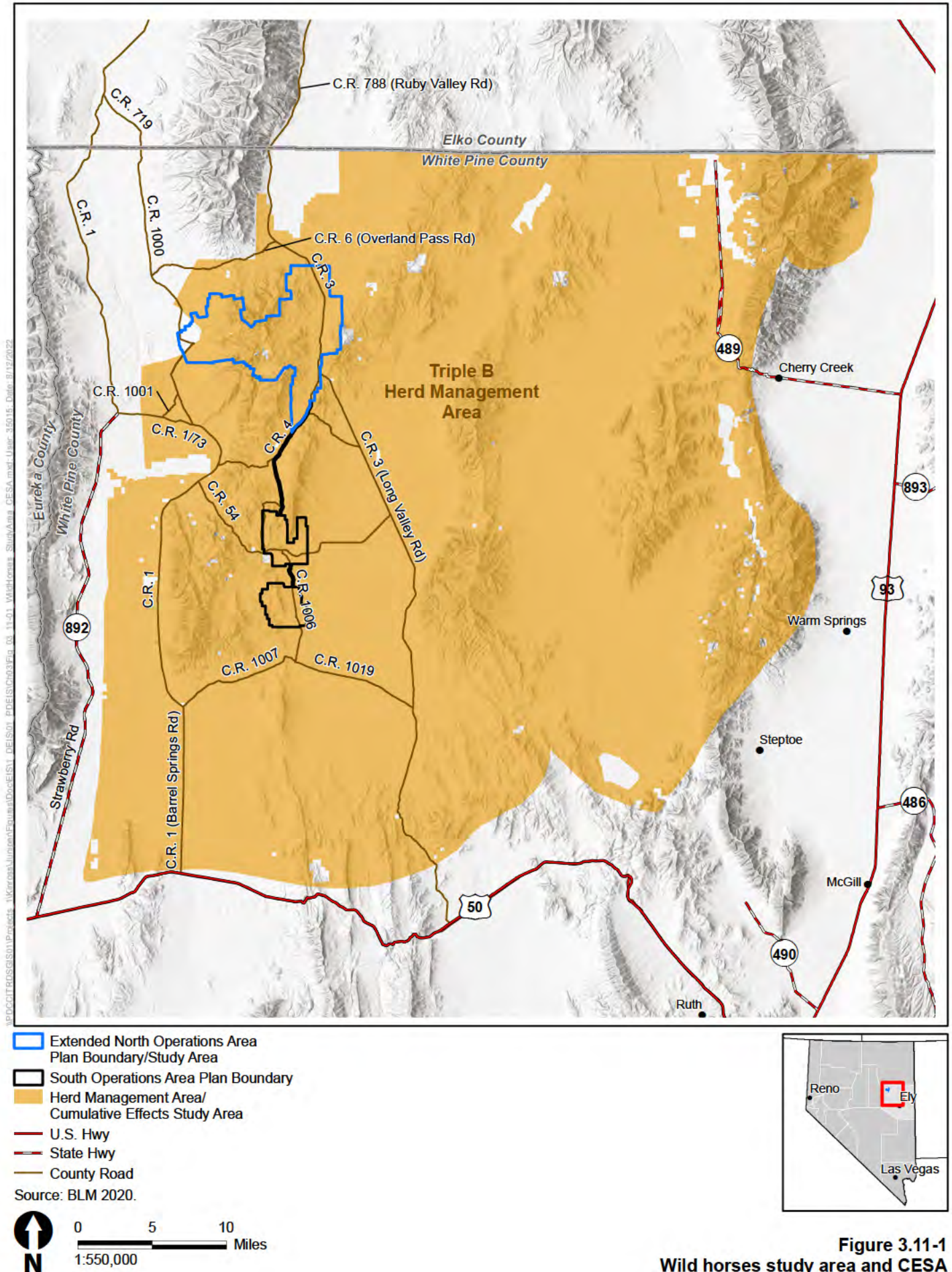
The study area for wild horses is the portion of the Triple B Herd Management Area (HMA) overlapped by the extended NOA Plan boundary, totaling 33,508 acres as shown on Figure 3.11-1. The CESA for wild horses is the BLM-designated Triple B HMA, totaling 1,232,717 acres as shown on Figure 3.11-1. This area was selected as the CESA because it is the geographic unit within which the BLM manages horse herds that could be affected by proposed mining activities.

**3.11.1. Affected Environment****3.11.1.1. Appropriate Management Levels and Rangeland Health**

The BLM manages wild horse herds within geographic units called HMAs, which are delineated based on unique terrain features, local climate, and natural resources. The Triple B HMA is 1,232,717 acres and part of the 2,059,987-acre Triple B Complex, which contains the Triple B, Maverick-Medicine, and Antelope Valley HMAs (BLM 2008). Wild horses move freely throughout the complex and the adjacent Cherry Springs Wild Horse Territory, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The BLM established an appropriate management level of 250 to 518 wild horses for the Triple B HMA and 482 to 821 wild horses for the Triple B Complex to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance and sustained rangeland health (BLM 2008, 2017, 2022).

Wild horse gathers were conducted in the Triple B Complex, including the Triple B HMA, in 2018, 2019, and 2022. The estimated population for the Triple B Complex prior to the 2022 gather was 3,475 wild horses, not including the 2022 foal crop (BLM 2022). In 2022, the BLM gathered 1,897 excess wild horses from public lands in the Triple B Complex. The BLM released back into the complex approximately 50 mares treated with the population suppression vaccine GonaCon-Equine and 50 stallions.

The presence or absence of water resources may influence wild horse usage of an area. Degradation of seep and spring sources and structures, and trampling of surrounding vegetation, by wild horses has been observed during surveys conducted near the BMM (ICF 2021). Wild horses may also drink from ephemeral drainages when water is present. Prior to conducting the gathers in the Triple B Complex in 2018 and 2019, the BLM observed heavy and increasing trailing by wild horses between limited water sources and foraging areas, contributing to reduced herbaceous vegetative cover and deteriorated habitat conditions around water sources and specific upland areas (BLM 2019a).



**Figure 3.11-1**  
**Wild horses study area and CESA**

# **Appendix F**

## **Cumulative Effects**

### ***Appendix F. Cumulative Effects***

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Rationale</b>	<b>Spatial Extent (acres)</b>	<b>Figure Number</b>
Special status wildlife species	Greater Sage-Grouse: Butte/Buck/White Pine and Ruby Valley Population Management Units All other species: NDOW Game Management Area 10	The identified population management units encompass sub-populations of Greater Sage-Grouse that may be affected by activities at the BMM. The rationale for selecting NDOW Game Management Area 10 as the CESA for all other species is the same as provided in the row above.	4,201,462 4,081,321	3.8-1 3.7-1
Livestock grazing	Warm Springs, Maverick Springs, Cold Creek, Ruby Valley, and Horse Haven grazing allotments	This area was selected as the CESA because livestock use of the Warm Springs and Maverick Springs grazing allotments may occur in conjunction with grazing in the adjacent Cold Creek, Ruby Valley, and Horse Haven grazing allotments.	518,092	3.10-1
Wild horses	Triple B Herd Management Area	This area was selected as the CESA because it is the geographic unit within which the BLM manages horse herds that could be affected by proposed mining activities.	1,232,717	3.11-1
Paleontological resources	Regional Exploration Plan boundary	This area was selected as the CESA because it encompasses both the NOA and SOA at the BMM and adjacent areas where KG-BM is authorized to develop exploration roads and drill pads. Disturbances with the potential to affect paleontological resources would occur within this area.	140,660	3.2-1
Cultural resources	The Area of Potential Effects for the Juniper Project, which encompasses the extended NOA Plan boundary plus a 5- mile radius	The 5-mile radius is consistent with the area analyzed in the 2016 <i>Bald Mountain Mine North and South Operations Area Projects Final Environmental Impact Statement</i> and encompasses areas of direct disturbance from the Juniper Project as well as the area that includes significant known cultural sites from which the Juniper Project would be visible.	209,544	3.13-1
Native American traditional values	The extended NOA Plan boundary plus a 5-mile radius	Same as above. Tribal consultation is ongoing and the CESA could be modified accordingly if properties of traditional religious and cultural importance are identified by tribal representatives.	209,544	3.13-1
Air quality and greenhouse gas emissions	Elko, Eureka, and White Pine Counties	This area was selected as the CESA based on the regional nature of air pollution and to facilitate comparison to county air quality data.	19,377,103	3.15-1
Land use and access	The extended NOA Plan boundary and access routes (primary and non-primary)	These areas and roads were selected for study because they encompass lands and transportation routes that may be used for the proposed Juniper Project.	44,688	3.16-1



*Appendix F. Cumulative Effects*

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**F.3. PAST AND PRESENT ACTIONS AND TRENDS**

Past and present actions are generally defined in this report to be those actions that were completed during or before June 2022 (past) or are being implemented as of July 2022 (present) or as otherwise inferred based on the date of the most recent available data. Descriptions of these actions and trends in the sections that follow are grouped into five general categories: mineral exploration and development; renewable energy development; transportation and utility infrastructure; land use and management; and climate, vegetation, and wildland fire trends. Past and present actions and trends are described for the maximum extent of the CESAs identified in Table F-1, an approximately 19,377,103-acre area displayed on Figure 3.1-1 encompassing Elko, Eureka, and White Pine Counties, hereafter referred to as the “maximum CESA.” The greatest emphasis was placed on identifying actions that are either near the NOA or are large-scale actions with potential for regional effects.

Due to variable data availability, surface disturbance from past and present actions was not inventoried and estimated for individual past and present actions. Instead, developed and disturbed land cover types from the LANDFIRE Existing Vegetation Type geospatial dataset produced by the U.S. Geological Survey (2016) were used as a proxy for existing, unreclaimed surface disturbance on the landscape.

**F.3.1. Mineral Exploration and Development**

Mineral exploration and development are activities associated with mining, oil recovery, and geothermal energy production. The maximum CESA contained 20 active metal mines, 6 active mineral material mines, 3 active oil fields, and 2 active geothermal energy production sites as of March 2021 (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology 2021a).

Mining in the maximum CESA has historically involved surface placer operations; exploration such as drilling, trenching, sampling, and road construction; underground mining; and open-pit mining. The surface disturbance associated with mining activities includes but is not limited to underground mine workings, open pits, prospect pits, dredge deposits, waste rock dumps, heap leach pads, tailings impoundments, ore processing facilities, and other structures. Recent mining and exploration at the BMM and adjacent areas has been centered within the Bald Mountain Mining District. Historical mining activities within this district include gold, silver, copper, lead, tungsten, and antimony mining; gold and silver production in this district has been associated with placer operations, underground mining, and open-pit mining for gold.

Mineral material pits and stockpiles for products such as sand and gravel, limestone, and building stones are present in various locations in the maximum CESA, particularly along the Interstate 80 corridor (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology 2021a).

Records indicate approximately 299 oil wells had been drilled within the maximum CESA as of November 2021, 273 of which are abandoned (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology 2021b). The surface disturbance associated with oil exploration and development includes but is not